(Monroe Institute Blog - November 30, 2023)

RECONNECTING, SLOWING DOWN, AND CENTERING PRIOR TO THE HOLIDAYS

Malorie Mackey
Actress, author and adventurer

Malorie Mackey is an actress, host, and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. Malorie's first book was published in 2017 and her short story "What Love Has Taught Me" has been published in the anthology "Choices." You can find Malorie's travel content on dozens of digital media platforms. Check out www.maloriesadventures.com for more. Malorie's adventures don't just encompass physical adventures. She has been a student of intuition since she was a teenager, studying at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. In 2019, Malorie discovered the Monroe Institute while filming her travel show. Since then, she has been studying the art and science of consciousness through many different programs and life experiences.

It's hard to believe that the end of the year is already upon us. Somehow, another year flew by just like that. Time can seem to move progressively faster if we're not centered, present, and ready to experience each moment as it comes. That being said, may I suggest that we create opportunities to slow down, reconnect with our higher selves, and center ourselves so we can experience each and every wonderful moment that comes our way during the holiday season.

The holidays can be incredibly overwhelming, emotional, and powerful. Whether it's the only time of the year we get to bask in the presence of our family and loved ones, or one of the few times we get to take time off to enjoy the simplicity of our relationships, it's truly an important time to stop and reconnect with ourselves. After all, if we're not here for ourselves, how can we be present for the ones around us? Even if the holidays bring forth feelings of pain and emptiness, it's important to stop, acknowledge, and work through that, as well. So, with the amplification of emotions, relationships, and activities we encounter during this time of the year, it's crucial to center, process our thoughts and feelings, and live in the moment so as to not let these precious moments pass us by. Honestly, throughout the holiday season, this becomes a hard task for me, as my work life becomes harder, and despite getting to go home and see my family and friends for a brief time, I find myself being pulled in all directions, having to participate in four different family celebrations and reconnect with friends all over the course of a single week. I understand how hard this can be. It's a goal of mine this year to slow down, reconnect with myself, and center daily from now until the end of the holiday season. Here's how I plan to accomplish this, and I encourage you to follow in my footsteps and join me in this challenge.

First, prior to centering, it's crucial to reconnect with yourself. To do this, I am starting each day with a quick five-minute mindfulness meditation followed by reflecting on exactly what I love about myself; the traits I have that I am grateful for. By truly expressing appreciation for the traits I am proud of, I find myself working harder towards

them and focusing more on them, which helps shift my perspective from a sometimes negative space to a more positive one. I set the intention to be more mindful in my daily practice. I find that through daily mindfulness, it becomes easier to slow down and center myself throughout the day. Living fully immersed in each moment throughout the holiday season makes it more vivid, connected, and valuable for me. I hope it will do the same for you.

With this focus of mindfulness, I can go through each experience fully engaged with the world around me. I listen to each and every thing someone says rather than living in my head. I try to fully experience every wonderful smell at each holiday gathering, each hug from someone dear, and each moment in full detail. This way, I can process thoughts and motivations in my morning reflections and then be fully immersed in each moment as it happens around me.

Now, this can be difficult at first. We tend to retreat into our heads when things get complicated, but I encourage you this holiday season to try and remain present throughout each moment. Challenge yourself, and if you find yourself not paying attention, try to gently and lovingly move yourself back into focusing on what is going on around you. Try to pay attention to the little details—the sights, the sounds, the smells—as the more you notice them, the easier it is to ground and center yourself in the world around you.

I find it useful at the end of the day, as well, to quickly reflect on everything that happened throughout the day to process thoughts I may not have been able to process while in the moment. This may be the best time to work through any loneliness or grief that may come up—also perfectly natural for the holiday season.
Only when we open ourselves to be present and aware throughout the holidays can we truly slow down, connect with those around us, and center ourselves back into the moving world. Who knows, you may even find that you remember things more vividly and that time begins to move slower the more immersed in life you are. Happy holidays to all! I hope you join me in this mindful holiday challenge and find the joy in the world around you during this special time of the year.